THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) Approval has been given on 15.2.2002 to the Government of Maharashtra for setting up a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) at Dronagiri in Navi Mumbai on the basis of the proposal received from them. The SEZ is promoted by the City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra Limited (CIDCO) over a total area of 4377 hectares at an estimated cost of Rs. 6359 crores.

(c) and (d) CIDCO has since finalized a preferred bidder for the project and the financial closure is now expected to be achieved by June, 2005.

Lotterry trade on sound commercial lines

3561. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that China was organising International Lottery Technology Equipment Expo in Beijing on 2.4.2005;

(b) whether it is also a fact that China sold lottery tickets in 2004 for more than 38 billion Yuan (i.e. US$ 4.6 billion); and

(c) if the above facts are correct, would he consider to organise lottery trade in India on sound commercial lines in tune with national interest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) So far there is no such proposal under consideration.

Patents for 966 medicines by Kerala

3562. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Kerala has sought patents for 966 medicinal plants during the period 2004-2005;

(b) if so, status of the above;

(c) whether the farmers are able to lay claim to the seeds developed by them under the geographical indicator act; and

(d) if so, the details including the number of such claims approved by the competent authority for the last three years, year-wise, category-wise and State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) Plants are not patentable as per the provisions of the Patents Act, 1970.

(c) and (d) The Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 provides for protection of the geographical indications in relation to seeds which originates from a specific region or locality within the country, if it has a special quality or reputation or other characteristics essentially attributable to its geographical origin. The Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 came into force from 15-9-2003 and so far the following three geographical indications have been registered:-

(a) Darjeeling Tea from the State of West Bengal

(b) Pochampally Ikat Sarees from the State of Andhra Pradesh

(c) Chandheri Sarees from the State of Madhya Pradesh

Talk with Japan to avoid double taxation

3563. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Japan had talks with India on avoiding double taxation to give new momentum to bilateral trade between India and Japan; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, and the steps being taken to boost bilateral trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Central Government is authorized to enter into Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) by virtue of power vested under Section 90 of the Income TaxAct, 1961. In exercise of this power a DTAA was entered into by the Government of India with the Government of Japan in 1989 which was notified *vide* GSR 101 (E) dated 01.03.1990. The Government of India and the Government of Japan have decided to renegotiate this Treaty. The steps being taken, on an on-going basis, for increasing India's exports to Japan include participation in trade fairs/exhibitions, organizing buyer-seller meets, exchange of delegations at both Government and business levels, exchange of information, etc.